

10th UNICART
International Conference

**Contamination, Assimilation and
Integration**

**How the fusion of cultures and territories is
influencing
the economy, food and wine, and tourism**

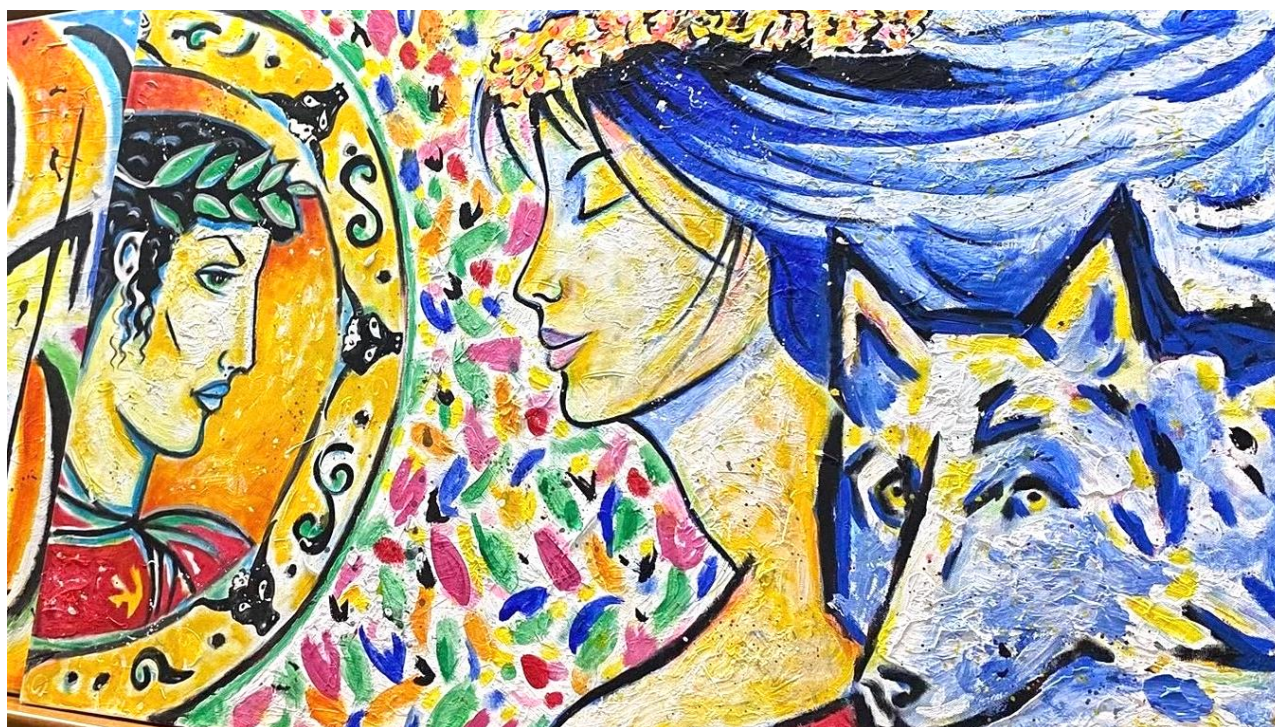


Image by: Carlo Gentili

Book of Abstract

**5 - 6 December 2025, hosted by the Great Hall
The AX Vittoria Palace (Malta)**



2025



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ACADEMIC RESEARCH & TOURISM

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Unibersitas Sancti Cyrilli
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present

**10th UNICART International Conference
from December 5th to 6th 2025 - Malta**

**Hosted at Great Hall
Of AX Palace Hotel**

Abstracts Book

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Immagine di copertina

Titolo:

ARTEMIDE ED APOLLO, la misurazione del tempo, dall'orologio lunare a quello solare, introdotta da Giulio Cesare nel 46 a.C.

Cm. 70x100, autore **Carlo Gentili**

Cover image

Title:

ARTEMIS AND APOLLO, the measurement of time, from the lunar clock to the solar clock, introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BC.

Cm. 70x100, author **Carlo Gentili**

Final editing: Francesco Favia

"Sir, ha già scritto la lettera a Babbo Natale?"
"Lloyd, Babbo Natale non esiste"
"Ma esiste ciò che gli potrebbe scrivere, sir"
"Questo non vuol dire che a Natale riceverò quello che ho chiesto"
"Non si preoccupi, sir. Per allora il regalo l'avrà già ricevuto"
"E quale sarebbe, Lloyd?"
"Il coraggio di desiderare, sir"
"Portami carta e penna, Lloyd"
"Con molto piacere, sir"



"Sir, have you already written a letter to Santa Claus?"
"Lloyd, Santa Claus doesn't exist."
"But what you could write to him does exist, sir."
"That doesn't mean I'll get what I asked for at Christmas."
"Don't worry, sir. You'll have already received the gift by then."
"And what would that be, Lloyd?"
"The courage to wish, sir."
"Bring me a pen and paper, Lloyd."
"With great pleasure, sir."
Simone Tempia – Vita con Lloyd



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SPONTANEOUS CONTRIBUTIONS



Environmental sustainability as a new awareness of the social determinants of health

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When we talk about the social determinants of health (SDH) this concept refers to the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. The SDH have an important influence on health inequities the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries. Aim: The aim of this article is to provide basic information about the problem on two of the five social determinants of health, specifically sustainable environment and environmental education. Methods: This article presents a set of results from the studies of the last years (2018-2021) on the environmental situation in Albania to know the current situation of environmental pollution, the impact of the environment on the health and well-being of the Albanian population and also as the first efforts towards environmental sustainability in fulfillment of the goals of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030. Results: According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022 – 2026, published in July 2021, Albania is highly exposed to disaster risks and vulnerabilities are compounded by high levels of poverty, infrastructure deficits, rapid urbanization and depletion of natural resources. Conclusions: The environment does not only mean the physical, natural or built context, but also the social one, which is almost never separable from the other. A healthy environment is a prerequisite for human health and well-being. Sustainable lifestyles are not necessarily in opposition to the pursuit of individual well-being, material and social wealth and green economic growth. Educating children and adults to awareness promotes sensitivity and facilitates knowledge of environmental processes.

Key Words: Environment; Sustainable behavior; Environmental sustainability; Environment education; Health.

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Sustainability Report of tourist districts in Sicily: theories, evidence and proposals

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The complexities of the current economic climate have gradually influenced the *modus operandi* of companies in terms of the significant attention paid to their relationship with society, cultures, territories, the natural environment, etc. In this context, there has been an increase in external demand for companies to demonstrate the sustainability of their activities in environmental, social and governance (ESG) terms. Conversely, there has been a corresponding increase in internal demand for companies to integrate sustainability objectives with their traditional economic and financial objectives (Bachiorri, 2017). As is well known, the acceptance of the sustainability paradigm has meant renewing and expanding reporting tools in order to cover all the various and variable relationships between companies and anthropogenic and natural systems. In this sense, in the field of Sustainability Accounting studies, there are several theoretical and regulatory proposals in place for sustainability reporting, including social, environmental and sustainability reports based on international standards, from those of the GRI to those of the SASB. In this field of study, sustainability reporting by companies in the hospitality and tourism sector, which are particularly affected by recurring environmental instability and rapid climate change, takes on particular importance. In particular, this paper aims to investigate the issue of corporate “measurement” of sustainable tourism through financial statements. More specifically, it aims to validate the possibility of the profitable use of sustainability reports in Sicilian tourism companies by using inter-organisational network relationships as a vehicle for the dissemination of socially responsible and sustainable administrative practices. It is believed that these companies can better address critical issues, especially environmental, as well as social and governance issues, through super-company levels of integration. In this research perspective, we have chosen to use the experience of Sicilian tourist districts. From a methodological point of view, the paper chooses to administer a questionnaire to a sample of businesses that fall within one of the Sicilian tourist districts. The aim is to explore the degree of dissemination of sustainability reporting in companies in the selected district with the aim of identifying the disconnect between theory and practice on the subject studied and understanding whether and how inter-organisational network relationships can influence its design and implementation in support of “glocal” development. In line with what has been said about the research objective and the methodology followed, the aim of the paper is to propose a reporting model that is tailored to the administrative and environmental specificities of tourism businesses. In particular, the paper is divided into two parts. The first part is more general in nature. The expected results concern a comparative-descriptive analysis of theoretical and regulatory models of sustainability reporting for tourism businesses, providing an insight into the state of the art of sustainability reporting with specific reference to the hospitality and tourism sector.

Key Words: sustainability report, tourist districts, tourism company

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL SCENARIOS: REORIENTING TEACHING TOWARDS NEW PATHWAYS OF COEXISTENCE BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE

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Reflecting on the link between sustainable development and education means reopening a profound paradigm discussion, capable of overcoming the anthropocentric model that has long separated humans from the natural world. The contemporary world, marked by climate change, ecosystem vulnerability and population mobility, requires a new ecological literacy that allows us to rethink the coexistence of species, cultures and territories. From this perspective, sustainability takes shape as a complex cultural horizon, founded on the intertwining of ethical, scientific and political dimensions, calling for a revision of the categories with which we interpret reality and plan for the future. Pedagogy takes on a decisive role here: not only responding to emerging problems, but also directing the collective imagination towards scenarios of responsible coexistence, developing awareness, care and intergenerational co-responsibility. In this sense, the Mediterranean Sea offers itself as a symbolic and educational place of extraordinary power: an inland sea that unites different shores, an archive of routes, memories and exchanges, a historical crossroads of peoples, languages and knowledge. It is not simply a geographical space, but a cultural landscape that has generated ways of life, food models, cosmologies and shared practices. Educating about the Mediterranean therefore means educating about complexity, limits, listening to others and to living beings. This is the context for the research-action project The Mediterranean as a space for ecological and cultural coexistence, carried out between 2022 and 2024 in two schools in the Ionian-Salento area. The project involved 18 teachers and 214 secondary school students. The project was developed as action research in collaboration with local marine protection agencies (Coast Guard and Naval League), focusing on the educational question of building ecological habits, a sense of territorial belonging and shared responsibility through coastal observation practices, territorial narratives, the study of migratory routes, the exploration of traditional forms of sustainable fishing and the creation of emotional maps and ecological logbooks. The experience fostered a renewed sense of belonging to the sea as a common good, awareness of the interdependence between peoples and ecosystems, and the adoption of attitudes of care and civic participation. The school thus becomes a generative space for Mediterranean citizenship, a place where one learns to recognise life as a network of relationships and the sea as a shared horizon to be inhabited responsibly.

Key Words: sustainable development; ecological pedagogy; Mediterranean; action research; ecological citizenship

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The use of artificial intelligence in the Online Travel Agencies

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In recent years, technological innovations have significantly changed the tourism industry. AI technology is rapidly transforming the tourism sector, enhancing customer service, improving operational efficiency, personalising travel experiences and supporting sustainability initiatives. There are various studies in the literature that use qualitative research to discover the opinions and thoughts of travel and tourism professionals on how AI has influenced the way they work and operate. Given the growing number of studies on this topic, other studies have sought to provide a comprehensive and systematic synthesis of the existing literature to highlight the most effective uses of AI in this context. This study aims to examine the opportunities and challenges of integrating AI into the tourism sector. In particular, it studies the effects of AI on improving the customer experience, simplifying operations, and providing personalised travel solutions by Online Travel Agencies (OTA). As is well known, OTA have taken on an increasingly important role in virtual/digital intermediation between companies selling transport and hospitality services and users of such services, gaining a competitive advantage over the companies themselves. This research contributes to the growing literature on AI in tourism, offering a focused investigation into its applications and impacts in the world of OTA. Through a literature review, this study aims to shed light on how OTA are adapting to the changing needs and tastes of travellers in the digital age. Therefore, the work aims to identify the challenges and opportunities for OTA by analysing the impact of digital transformation on old business models. Furthermore, this chapter emphasises the importance for OTA to embrace digital innovation, streamline operations, and develop engaging travel experiences to maintain their competitive advantage in an ever-changing market.

Key Words: OTA, Artificial Intelligence, Innovation



Living Environments, Human Dignity, and Recovery: Environmental Health and Quality of Life in People with Substance Use Disorder in Albania and the Balkans

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Introduction: Environmental health, the safety, comfort, and dignity of one's living environment is an essential yet often neglected aspect of quality of life (QoL) for people with Substance Use Disorder. This study explores how environmental conditions influence the wellbeing and recovery potential of individuals with SUD in Albania, offering reflections relevant to the Balkan region.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted at the Addiction Unit of the American Hospital in Tirana, Albania, from January to June 2024. Eighty-three participants (68 men, 15 women; mean age 41.7 ± 14.1 years) meeting DSM-V criteria for SUD completed the WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire in Albanian. The tool assessed four domains as physical, psychological, social, and environmental health, alongside demographic and clinical data. Statistical analysis included descriptive measures and hierarchical regression.

Results: Of participants, 59% used legal substances (alcohol, benzodiazepines) and 41% illicit drugs (cocaine, cannabis, opioids). The environmental domain scored highest (mean 65.9 ± 22.9 ; Cronbach $\alpha = 0.84$), with greatest satisfaction in transport (59%), living conditions (42%), and healthcare access (46%), despite widespread unemployment (60%) and comorbidity (76%). Employment and sex significantly predicted higher environmental scores ($p < 0.01$).

Discussion and Conclusions: In a region where stigma and economic hardship remain strong, environmental stability stands out as a quiet form of resilience. Perceptions of a "good environment" may reflect more than current wellbeing, they echo memories of scarcity during Albania's communist period, when housing and basic comforts were limited. The post-transition investment in better homes has become a symbol of recovery and dignity, not merely comfort. Strengthening environmental health, safe housing, healthcare access, and community support, should therefore be seen as central to addiction recovery and reintegration across the Balkans.

Key Words: Environmental Health; Quality of Life; Substance Use Disorder; Albania; Balkans; Recovery.

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THE “GRAY AREA” BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE IN INTERNATIONAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

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The protection of cultural heritage is not merely a requirement of identity, but constitutes a primary legal value recognized by the Italian Constitution and the international community. Article 9 of the Constitution, among its fundamental principles, establishes that the Republic "promotes the development of culture and scientific and technical research" and protects "the landscape and the historical and artistic heritage of the Nation." The latest amendment in 2022 extended this protection to the environment and biodiversity, highlighting the intergenerational dimension of this commitment. At the same time, Article 10 requires the Italian legal system to conform to the generally recognized norms of international law. The protection of cultural heritage, therefore, arises at the intersection of constitutional law and international humanitarian law, where respect for cultural heritage becomes a duty of the State and an obligation imposed by international conventions and custom.

Key Words: Environment, Law, Constitution, Culture

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Green trust versus Greenwashing intersectoral evaluation and implications for public policy in the EU

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The article examines the relationship between “green trust” and greenwashing from an intersectoral perspective, integrating recent literature with a mapping of regulatory interventions (law enforcement, self-regulation, EU initiatives). Methodologically, we combine a narrative review with an analysis of recent (2022–2025) enforcement cases and instruments to derive a plausible sector-level ranking of greenwashing risk. The results indicate the following risk hierarchy: (1) fashion/fast fashion; (2) aviation/transport; (3) fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG—food and non-food); (4) cross-sector corporate climate claims. We propose the conceptual pathway—evidence → perceived verifiability → green trust → outcomes—arguing that the specificity of claims (quantitative indicators, LCA, recognized certifications) operates as costly signals that strengthen trust and reduce the risk of challenge. From a public-policy perspective, we operationalize recent European requirements on misleading commercial practices in environmental communication and offer a compliance checklist for firms, useful for anticipating the transposition and enforcement of the new rules. The study’s originality lies in articulating an enforcement-informed intersectoral ranking, linked to a trust-formation mechanism and translated into actionable recommendations (including for agri-food communication). Limitations concern intra-sector heterogeneity and regulatory dynamism; future research directions include A/B experiments on message attributes and systematic analyses of online advertising content.

Key Words: green trust; greenwashing; intersectoral risk; sustainability communication; consumer protection; EU public policy; verifiability.

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Philosophical perspectives on a cultural impact of migration: the value of Democracy

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The phenomenon of migration has always characterized human history, yet in the contemporary context it emerges as a decisive cultural and political device that forces us to reconsider the very foundations of both democracy and the human practices related to it. Philosophically, the migrant, as the paradigmatic figure of our time, disrupts the binary oppositions of inside/outside and friend/enemy, challenging the notion of (individual and collective) identity and exposing its relational nature. The figure of the stranger has always been ambivalent: hospes and hostis, guest and enemy, welcomed under the law of hospitality yet always bearing the potential for conflict. From this perspective, migration should not be reduced to a question of policy or economics, but rather compels us to interrogate the democracy itself, not merely as a political system but as a cultural value – historically dynamic and transformable – proper to the Western tradition and especially inherited from the Mediterranean area, characterized by the human practice of hospitality. In any case, following the Italian philosopher Donatella Di Cesare, the closure of borders and the sovereign exclusion of the non-citizen reveal an ethnocentric process incompatible with democratic principles, so migration becomes a lens through which to rethink democracy as openness, a value that endures only if it can be contested by what exceeds it. In this regard, reflecting on the practice of hospitality does not mean unconditional inclusion or the avoidance of conflicts, rather entails observing the cultural side of democracy grounded in relationality, contestation, and cohabitation. Nevertheless, it means recognizing a classical and Mediterranean anthropological dimension of human being characterized by openness to plurality and to the unknown. In this perspective, migration is a dispositif that obliges us to question our identity and democracy itself.

Key Words: Cultural value of Democracy, Hospitality, Migration, Stranger, Mediterranean Identity

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Support for the internationalization of Italian companies: the Export Action Plan 2025 and the role of digitalization in the agri-food sector

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Internationalization represents a strategic level for Italian companies, allowing them to expand markets, strengthen competitiveness, and enhance the value of Made in Italy excellence. The Italian Export Plan of July 2025 defines an operational approach aimed at supporting companies in their path toward international expansion through programs. The plan aims to accelerate export penetration into high-potential markets such as India, Brazil, Turkey, Gulf countries, Africa and the Balkans, while maintaining support in traditional markets. High-potential markets identified by the Export Action Plan 2025. The study proposes an approach based on quantitative methods, analyzing official data on agri-food exports, the participation of Italian companies in foreign markets and the adoption of digital tools. Particular attention is devoted to digitalization, a key factor for optimizing international marketing strategies, managing online sales channels, and collecting data for more efficient business decisions. The combination of structured support policies and digital innovation enables companies to accelerate their entry foreign markets, increase competitiveness, and seize new opportunities for sustainable growth. Subsequently, the full article will further explore data collected from the 2025 Action Plan, identifying foreign markets with the highest growth in Italian agri-food exports and highlighting the concrete benefits of digitalization for Italian SMEs

Key Words: Internationalization; Digitalization; Export

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Food and wine heritage and cultural identity in Basilicata: perceptions, participation, and local valorization processes

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In recent years, gastronomic heritage played a key function in cultural policies, local development, and identity building process, especially in rural and remote areas. This study explores how the heritage of food and wine in Basilicata, a region marked by strong rural roots and most food and wine tradition, is not just a preservation act, but a dynamic process of cultural negotiation and territorial regeneration, with important implications for social cohesion and regional development policies. The paper also reflects on the function of Traditional Agri-Food Products (PAT) as cultural and identity markers, able to link authenticity, tradition and sustainable development. By adopting a perspective focused on the enhancement and strategic management of territorial resources, we aim to shed light on the managerial and relational dynamics that support local development processes linked to the food and wine heritage. Through a quantitative approach, the research investigates the perception, participation and feeling of the local population with food and wine heritage, assessing knowledge, involvement and the socio-economic and tourism impacts of promotion projects, such as those by Local Action Group (GAL).

Key Words: Food and wine Heritage, cultural identity, territorial regeneration



Business Innovation and Territorial Valorization in the Wine Industry: The Madri Leone Case within the FoodSystem 5.0 Framework

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In recent years, food and wine tourism has become one of the main drivers of local development and a key instrument for enhancing Italy's territorial excellence. The experiential dimension of wine and gastronomy has progressively merged with cultural, environmental, and digital aspects, reshaping the interactions among agricultural enterprises, tourists, and local communities. Within this context, the digital transformation of the wine sector has emerged as a process of organizational and competitive renewal through which firms reinterpret their relationship with both territory and market (Giordano, 2022). However, recent studies in the wine industry (Galati et al., 2019; Dressler & Paunovic, 2021) reveal a gradual overcoming of the "ability-willingness paradox" proposed by Chrisman et al. (2015): numerous small family-owned wineries now adopt precision viticulture technologies, e-commerce systems, and collaborative platforms, shaping new forms of "innovation through tradition." These dynamics align with the FoodSystem 5.0 framework (Giordano, 2022), which conceptualizes the agri-food transition as a distributed governance process based on the integration of sustainability, territorial embeddedness, and technological collaboration. This study examines the case of Madri Leone, a family-run winery rooted in four generations of wine producers, which today stands out for its ability to combine tradition and innovation while promoting the central role of women as drivers of change. Located in a rural area with a strong wine-making vocation, the company has undertaken a diversification process that integrates production, hospitality, and digital storytelling of the territory, becoming an emblematic model of wine experience and sustainable female entrepreneurship. The analysis draws on the FoodSystem 5.0 framework (Giordano, 2022), which interprets digitalization as a lever for the transition toward an intelligent, collaborative, and value-sharing agri-food system. From this perspective, Madri Leone exemplifies how digital storytelling can serve as a strategic tool for territorial valorization: through social media platforms, narrative campaigns, and multimedia content, the company translates its identity heritage into contemporary languages, turning family tradition into a distinctive competitive asset in both national and international markets. The study contributes to the economic-managerial literature in three ways: (1) it highlights the role of female leadership in the digital transition of family firms; (2) it demonstrates the compatibility between socio-emotional capital and technological innovation; and (3) it proposes an integrated model of territorial valorization in which food and wine tourism acts as a vehicle for economic and identity regeneration.

Key Words: Digital Transformation; Territorial Valorization; Cultural Heritage Management

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The sustainability report of tourism companies: the case of Online Travel Agencies

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The complexities of the current economic climate have gradually influenced the modus operandi of companies in terms of the significant attention paid to their relationship with society, cultures, territories, the natural environment, etc. In this context, there has been an increase in external demand for companies to demonstrate the sustainability of their activities in environmental, social and governance (ESG) terms. Conversely, there has been a corresponding increase in internal demand for companies to integrate sustainability objectives with their traditional economic and financial objectives (Bachiorri, 2017). As is well known, the acceptance of the sustainability paradigm has meant renewing and expanding reporting tools in order to cover all the various and variable relationships between companies and anthropogenic and natural systems. In this sense, in the field of Sustainability Accounting studies, there are several theoretical and regulatory proposals in place for sustainability reporting, including social, environmental and sustainability reports based on international standards, from those of the GRI to those of the SASB. In this field of study, sustainability reporting by companies in the hospitality and tourism sector, which are particularly affected by recurring environmental instability and rapid climate change, takes on particular importance. In particular, this paper aims to investigate the issue of corporate ‘measurement’ of sustainable tourism with reference to Online Travel Agencies (OTA). As is well known, OTA have taken on an increasingly important role in virtual/digital intermediation between companies selling transport and hospitality services and users of such services, gaining a competitive advantage over the companies themselves. The literature on OTA has mainly focused on issues related to pricing policies, service quality, customer satisfaction and reputational aspects, while the issue of sustainability has been less explored. Indeed, the main OTA, Booking, Airbnb and Expedia, have shown attention to sustainability, especially environmental sustainability, albeit with different approaches. Booking has used its Travel Sustainable Programme to enable users to identify accommodation facilities engaged in practices with a lower environmental and social impact (Gonzalez et al., 2025). Airbnb has used an approach based on offering advice on reducing energy consumption, managing waste efficiently, using eco-friendly cleaning products and promoting sustainable mobility (Arzoumanidi et al., 2022). Expedia has introduced an eco-friendly criterion into its rating system, allowing users to express their opinion on sustainability (Gonzalez et al., 2025). Moving on from these assumptions, the paper focuses on the environmental, social and governance practices adopted by the above-mentioned major OTA and on the disclosure of these practices in their respective sustainability reports. The survey is conducted using a qualitative approach, based on a documentary study of the financial statements of Booking, Airbnb and Expedia from both a diachronic perspective, considering the financial statements for the three-year period 2022-2024, and a synchronic perspective, comparing the information areas of the financial statements of the three OTA as well as the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the related information.

Key Words: OTA, Sustainability Report, Tourism

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Culturalization: Shaping the Transition to Sustainability

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This paper explores the concept of sustainability transition as a key sociological category, aiming to understand its specific meaning and explanatory potential compared with social change. The central hypothesis is that culture represents the decisive dimension of transition: the space where values, narratives, and collective orientations are reshaped to enable sustainable futures. Starting from the main theoretical frameworks—the Multi-Level Perspective, the governance of complexity, and the just sustainability transitions approach—the paper highlights their neglect of the cultural and symbolic components of change. It then proposes a culturological reading of sustainability, based on Soini and Birkeland's typology of cultural sustainability, to show how transitions take shape through processes of meaning-making and value negotiation. Ultimately, it argues that a genuine sustainability transition must be a cultural transition, since only cultural transformation can align social practices with the awareness of ecological and temporal limits.

Key Words: Culturalization; Sustainability; Transition; Culture

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The Role of the Men's "Oda" in Cultural Cohesion in Albania: A Possibility for Integration or a Risk of Assimilation?

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The men's "Oda" has historically served as a key structure for preserving cultural identity and social norms within Albanian communities. It functioned as a space where men gathered to discuss important social issues, make collective decisions, and uphold traditional values, deeply influencing the organization and functioning of the community. In the contemporary period, characterized by profound demographic changes, intensive urbanization, and the influence of globalization, the function and role of the Oda are undergoing fundamental transformations. These changes face new challenges related to the transformation of cultural heritage and its role in community life. This study aims to deeply analyze whether the changes in the function of the Oda represent a form of cultural integration that helps maintain and strengthen social cohesion in the contemporary context, or if they indicate gradual assimilation and the loss of old traditions. Relying on an interdisciplinary approach involving cultural anthropology, sociology, and identity studies, this work examines the ways in which the Oda has been given a new dimension within contemporary Albanian society. Most of the analysis focuses on adaptations in the function of the Oda, taking into account changes in the social structure and composition of communities, the impact of modernization, and the need to preserve cultural values and traditions. In this context, the study also addresses the tensions and conflicts that may arise from this transformation process, where the interplay between tradition and modernity often presents difficult challenges for the community. What was once a homogeneous structure with clear and accepted norms now faces cultural diversity, changes in communication methods, and shifts in social structure. These changes raise questions about the sustainability of the Oda as a tool for preserving identity and its role in the future. Within this framework, the transformations of the Oda reflect a complex interweaving of assimilation of new influences, integration of social changes, and strengthening of cultural cohesion, emphasizing the need for these phenomena to be actively incorporated into the formulation of cultural and social policies, in order to ensure the preservation of identity and the well-being of communities amid contemporary changes.

Key Words: Men's Oda, Cultural Identity, Integration, Assimilation, Social Cohesion, Transformation



Tourism, community, and applied anthropology: from the Riace Model to new forms of sustainability

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Tourism anthropology is currently experiencing a phase of profound theoretical and methodological reconfiguration that is redefining its epistemological horizons and practical applications. Historically oriented toward the critical analysis of tourism's cultural impacts, the discipline has progressively embraced participatory and interventionist paradigms, positioning anthropologists as mediators, facilitators, and co-designers of sustainable tourism initiatives. Through the adoption of collaborative methodologies, decolonial frameworks, and reflexive praxis, contemporary research increasingly seeks to articulate models predicated upon social justice, equity, and the preservation of local heritage. The "Riace Model" exemplifies a paradigmatic case of socially-engaged tourism, demonstrating the capacity of tourism to simultaneously foster hospitality, territorial regeneration, and intercultural inclusion. At the same time, it illuminates the persistent tensions between normative ethical aspirations and the structural constraints imposed by institutional, political, and economic frameworks. Emerging research trajectories — encompassing green and cultural tourism, ecotourism, and the digital mediation of travel experiences — underscore the intricate entanglements of mobility, identity construction, and sustainability imperatives in the contemporary global landscape. Within this context, tourism anthropology assumes a critical function: it interrogates the mechanisms of cultural exchange, representation, and commodification, while contributing to the theoretical and practical elaboration of tourism practices that are ethically informed and culturally sensitive. By foregrounding local voices, attending to power asymmetries, and emphasizing relational ethics, the discipline not only enhances our understanding of the social dimensions of tourism but also informs the design of interventions capable of promoting inclusive, resilient, and contextually grounded tourism futures.

Key Words: Anthropology – Tourism – Riace – Sustainability – Inclusion – Culture



The Italo-Albanian capitulations (15th-16th centuries) between legal history and cultural identity: the case of San Demetrio Corone

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This work examines the capitulations signed between the Albanian communities who immigrated to Calabria between the 15th and 16th centuries and the local feudal lords. These documents are crucial for reconstructing the birth of the Italo-Albanian hamlets and the social, economic, and legal structure of Arbëria. The capitulations regulated the rights and duties of the new inhabitants, protecting land use, economic organization, and, above all, religious and cultural freedom according to the Byzantine rite, a central element of their identity. Particular attention is paid to San Demetrio Corone, one of the oldest and most prestigious Arbëreshë centers in Calabria. Here, the agreements signed with the Abbot of Sant'Adriano not only favored a permanent settlement, but also allowed the community to preserve its language, traditions, customs, and religious heritage, which still today represent a distinctive feature of the area. The capitulations, in addition to their historical and legal significance, testify to an early model of integration and cultural coexistence that has left a living and recognizable legacy. The research highlights how Arbëreshë history and culture, which have survived for centuries thanks to the strength of local communities, today constitute a unique heritage of the Calabrian region. This identity can and must be revitalized through cultural and tourism development initiatives, promoting minority languages, religious rites, traditions, food and wine, and iconic sites of Arbëria, with significant implications for sustainable tourism and the cultural growth of inland areas.

Key Words: Arbëreshë Diaspora – Cultural Identity – Historical Heritage



Local Public Procurement and Environmental Sustainability: The Implementation of Green Public Procurement and the DNSH Principle within the Framework of the PNRR

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With the approval of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) in 2021, the Italian Government adopted and implemented at the national level the European “Next Generation EU” programme, launched with the specific aim of responding to the socio-economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. A key pillar of the PNRR is undoubtedly the “green” dimension. Within this framework, the ecological transition has become a central component of public policy on public procurement, influencing both the planning and, more concretely, the execution phases of procurement procedures. At the core of this framework lies the Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle, introduced by Regulation (EU) 2020/852, also known as the “Taxonomy Regulation for Sustainable Activities.” In simplified terms, the DNSH principle requires that every financed intervention must not cause significant harm to the environment. Following the introduction of the DNSH principle, the legislator made the application of Minimum Environmental Criteria (CAM) in procurement procedures mandatory, further reinforcing the regulatory system underpinning the concept of Green Public Procurement (GPP). In this context, local authorities — as the main implementers of PNRR funding — play a pivotal role. However, early implementation experiences have highlighted major challenges and significant territorial disparities, with substantial differences between large and small or medium-sized local authorities, as well as between the North and South of the country. This paper aims to explore the practical implementation of the DNSH principle and the Green Public Procurement system, with specific reference to local public procurement. The objective is twofold: first, to reconstruct the regulatory and operational framework governing the matter; and second, to examine the challenges and opportunities emerging in practice, with particular attention to regional differences between Northern and Southern Italy. The study concludes by proposing public policy measures aimed at achieving a truly equitable and sustainable procurement system.

Key Words: PNRR – GPP (Green Public Procurement) – DNSH – Public Procurements – Public administration

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A Bibliometric Analysis of ESG Integration in Corporate Finance: Trends, Influences, and Future Research Directions

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Over the past two decades, the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria into corporate financial decision-making has become a central topic in both academic research and investment practice. Investors and corporate managers are increasingly focused on how sustainable practices can influence the cost of capital, financial performance, and corporate resilience. Despite growing interest, the literature on ESG and finance remains highly fragmented and interdisciplinary, encompassing studies from corporate finance, economics, strategic management, and environmental studies. In this context, a bibliometric analysis can provide a systematic overview of trends, key influences, and research gaps. This study aims to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the academic literature on ESG integration in corporate financial decision-making, with a particular focus on the cost of capital and cost of debt. The analysis is based on a dataset constructed from the Scopus database, covering the period 2000–2025. After data cleaning and standardization, bibliometric indicators were extracted, including annual publication counts, most productive authors, most influential journals, countries of publication, and citation metrics. In addition, co-keyword analysis was performed using specialized software (e.g., VOSviewer and Bibliometrix) to identify major thematic areas, research clusters, and emerging trends. The findings of this bibliometric analysis are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the evolution of research on ESG integration in corporate finance. By mapping the main themes, influential authors, and emerging trends, this study aims to offer valuable insights into the current state of the literature and to support scholars and practitioners in identifying promising directions for further investigation.

Key Words: ESG; Corporate Finance; Corporate sustainability

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Calabrian tourism: between identity and innovation: artificial intelligence's contribution to regional development

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For Calabria, tourism has always represented far more than an economic activity: it is an expression of identity, a cultural mirror through which the region narrates and recognizes itself. In recent years, the sector has experienced a significant expansion, the result of a gradual process of territorial enhancement and a profound cultural shift that has redefined the very meaning of travel. This transformation goes well beyond the increase in visitor numbers or accommodation capacity; it concerns the way the territory is perceived, interpreted, and lived through forms of experiential, cultural, and sustainable tourism in which authenticity and belonging have become central values.

This reflection takes shape at a time when Calabria, traditionally associated with seasonal seaside tourism, is rediscovering a broader vocation rooted in memory, slowness, and participation. Root tourism emerges as a bridge between past and future—a phenomenon capable of strengthening emotional ties while generating processes of endogenous development in inland areas, where the presence of visitors contributes to the cultural and demographic regeneration of small towns.

At the same time, data from the Regional Tourism Observatory reveal a 10% overall increase in arrivals and a 50% growth in international overnight stays, alongside a remarkable 30.7% rise in non-hotel accommodations. These figures confirm a shift toward a more diversified, relational, and experience-based tourism model, in which the traveler ceases to be a passive observer and becomes an active participant in a shared process of discovery and interaction with the local environment.

Within this evolving scenario, artificial intelligence stands out as a strategic resource capable of supporting the sector's transformation by providing predictive analysis, personalized services, and innovative tools for digital promotion. Yet technology alone cannot ensure progress: it must be accompanied by investment in human capital, education, and an integrated governance framework that harmonizes innovation, sustainability, and the preservation of local identity.

Grounded in a critical review of recent literature and an examination of official regional data, this study seeks to identify the forms of tourism most consistent with Calabria's cultural vocation and to explore how emerging technologies can enhance the region's competitiveness and sustainability.

Key Words: Sustainable Tourism, Artificial Intelligence, Regional Development;

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Geodemographics of the Mediterranean Basin: New findings and trends

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The Mediterranean region is not homogeneous. Rather, it is a mosaic of peoples and states characterised by profound historical, economic, demographic, and religious differences. The sea forms a veritable frontier between the developed countries of the north and the less developed countries of the south and east. It also separates predominantly Muslim countries in the south from predominantly Catholic countries in the north. Also populations at different stages of demographic transition. The main demographic trends that have emerged in this area are: a shift in the demographic epicentre from the northwest to the southeast; a generational gap between the southern (African) and eastern (Asian) shores, which have young populations, and the northern (European) shore, whose population is ageing rapidly; a significant migration towards the northern shore. Taking this context into account, this study employs a geodemographic approach to identify new regularities, differences and trends, and providing updated demographic forecasts for countries bordering the Mare Nostrum. Finally, as a paradigmatic example, this research highlights the strategic role that differential demography has played in the complex and tragic Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

Key Words: Geodemographics, Mediterranean Basin, Demographic Transition

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Socio-economic analysis of Bordeaux as a Wine Tourism destination: a framework of insights and Best Practices for sustainable wine tourism development in Calabria

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Wine tourism represents a strategic sector for territorial enhancement and for strengthening the international competitiveness of wine-producing destinations. However, not all regions are able to fully exploit its potential. The analysis of best practices makes it possible to identify replicable strategies capable of integrating tourism development, sustainability, and cultural identity. Nevertheless, many emerging areas struggle to turn their wine tourism potential into tangible competitive advantages. This is mainly due to the lack of well-structured management models and effective internationalization strategies. The aim of this paper is to analyze the wine tourism approaches adopted in Bordeaux, a destination internationally recognized for its excellence and accessibility. The purpose is to identify strategic elements that can be adapted to develop a competitive and sustainable wine tourism model in Calabria. The research was conducted through an analysis focused on observing best practices for the sustainable and tourism-oriented planning in the Bordeaux area, recognized in 2015 as the “Best European Destination”. The study also examined case studies of wine heritage enhancement, such as Château Pape Clément and La Cité du Vin. Both represent good examples of excellence and integration between innovation and tradition, able to respond to the needs of international tourists. In Calabria, the wine sector constitutes a deeply rooted element of the region’s cultural and socioeconomic structure. The area is characterized by high-value native grape varieties and a millennia-old winemaking tradition. A strategic asset lies in the presence of the Europe’s highest vineyard and the historical significance of Krimisa wine today’s Cirò—renowned in ancient Greece as a prestigious product awarded to the Olympic Games’s winners. Nevertheless, the Calabrian wine sector continues to face challenges in achieving international recognition and market penetration. Such difficulties stem from structural weaknesses in integrated promotion, tourism infrastructure, and territorial branding strategies. The analysis reveals how the Bordeaux best practice stands out through the integration of its wine heritage with accessibility, combining tradition and innovation. In contrast, Calabria-despite its authentic wine heritage-lacks a tourism governance system oriented toward internationalization. Adapting the Bordeaux best practice could therefore represent an effective strategy to enhance the competitiveness of Calabrian wine tourism, through a model based on sustainability, accessibility, and territorial identity, supported by European funds and Cohesion Policy for the redevelopment and integrated promotion of the region.

Key Words: Best Practices, Wine tourism, European Funds, Internationalization



Artificial Intelligence in Human Resource Management within Public Administration: Efficiency, Innovation and Sustainability

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In a global context deeply shaped by digitalization processes and technological evolution, Public Administration (PA) is called upon to redefine its organizational models in order to effectively respond to the emerging needs of society. The introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in human resource management represents one of the most significant challenges and, at the same time, one of the most promising opportunities to combine administrative efficiency with innovative capacity. AI enables the automation of repetitive tasks, the optimization of data analysis, and the improvement of recruitment, training, and personnel development processes, fostering a more transparent, timely, and results-oriented management approach. However, the digital transformation of Public Administration cannot be reduced to a mere technological upgrade; it requires a structural reflection on organizational processes, decision-making models, and the ethical and legal principles that must guide the use of AI. The adoption of algorithmic systems in human resource management entails major implications in terms of accountability, privacy protection, prevention of discrimination, and compliance with the constitutional principles of good administration, impartiality, and transparency (Article 97 of the Italian Constitution). This paper analyzes the transition from the traditional bureaucratic model to the digital PA, examines the main applications of AI in public sector personnel management, and explores environmental sustainability and Green AI as new horizons for public governance. The aim is to outline a model of “intelligent administration” capable of integrating technological innovation, social responsibility, and environmental protection, placing human beings and fundamental rights at the core of the transformation.

Key Words: Public Administration; Artificial Intelligence; Personnel Management; Sustainability; Green AI

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Gender Inequalities and Socioeconomic Resilience in Italy

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The analysis of gender inequalities in the Italian context highlights the persistence of a marked asymmetry between men and women across various areas of economic and social life. Despite legislative progress and the rise in female educational attainment, women's participation rate in the labor market remains among the lowest in Europe, characterized by high levels of job insecurity, sectoral segmentation, and underutilization of human capital. Wage gaps and the limited presence of women in managerial positions reveal a structural divide, further exacerbated by the unequal distribution of unpaid care work. The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified these issues, leading to an increase in female inactivity and a regression in employment progress achieved over the past decade. Southern regions exhibit heightened vulnerability, with female employment rates more than twenty percentage points lower than in the North, reflecting the coexistence of adverse economic and cultural factors. The phenomenon of gender-based violence, which worsened during the pandemic, constitutes an additional indicator of systemic inequality, rooted in power imbalances and institutional shortcomings. Considering this evidence, it is essential to reformulate public policies toward gender mainstreaming, strengthening work-life balance services, and promoting educational and professional pathways in STEM disciplines. Only an integrated and place-based approach can support the transition toward a model of genuine equity, capable of enhancing women's potential as a strategic factor for cohesion and sustainable development.

Key Words: Gender equality; Female employment; Wage disparities; Covid-19 pandemic; Territorial divides.

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Legislation and mediation in cultural and territorial integration processes: institutional impact on economic dynamics

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In a context of increasing globalization and mobility, the interaction between cultures and territories is reshaping economic and institutional dynamics. This paper examines the dual role of legislation and mediation in cultural and territorial integration processes, assessing how legal frameworks and mechanisms of dialogue influence the economic outcomes of diversity. Using a qualitative methodology based on document analysis, a review of recent literature, and official European and Italian data, the study addresses three main questions: how do legislative frameworks foster economic inclusion? What is the role of institutional and social mediation? And what implications arise for economic growth and social cohesion? The findings indicate that integration generates positive outcomes only when supported by strong institutions, inclusive policies, and effective mediation tools. The Italian experience and the European framework (Action Plan 2021–2027, EU Regulation No. 2021/1060, Italian Decree-Law No. 130/2020) demonstrate that diversity becomes a driver of development when sustained by multi-level governance and structured dialogue practices. The implications highlight the need to invest in active policies, anti-discrimination protection, and civic participation, turning plurality into innovation and cohesion. In conclusion, legislation and mediation emerge as complementary levers to channel cultural contamination toward a model of productive, balanced, and sustainable integration.

Key Words: Integration – Institutions – Mediation

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Building bridges between humanistic knowledge and STEM subjects: towards a synergistic paradigm of knowledge integration

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The research focuses mainly on the synergy between STEM subjects and humanistic studies. The importance of this combination emerges, with arrogance, in every area: for example, in PNRR context and in double degree European programmes. This ideal direction finds its concretization in the recurrent — and often emphasized — theme of interdisciplinarity, which finds functional application in communication concept. In fact, we cannot ignore accessible, emotionally engaging communication capable of guiding the action. In this sense, the proposed paradigm assumes concreteness in citizens education, translating into educational practices aimed at making them aware in emergencies' management, related to hydrogeological risk, one of the most urgent environmental and social issues of our time. An operation that traditional awareness methods often fail to carry out: translating scientific data into behavioural awareness. Hence the need to build an epistemological bridge between different levels of knowledge: humanistic (communication ethics, social psychology) and engineering exploiting Virtual Reality (VR) as a mediation tool. The study presents an analysis and design of a communication protocol based on VR viewers use for population exposed to flood risk. The goal is to overcome mere technical information by offering a simulated immersive experience. Through virtual experiment, the user is “immersed” in a risk situation that allows him to: emotionally experience the impact and discomfort of the event, anchoring the memory to the sensory context, reinforcing the sense of civic responsibility; actively learn security protocols (“what to do, before, during and after the event”) in a real-world risk-free environment. Dialogue and interaction between knowledge are functional to make levels of risk perception and community resilience meaningful, transforming citizens from mere recipients of information to active participants in disaster management cycle.

Key Words: Interdisciplinary approach, non-structural NBS, climate change mitigation, Virtual Reality (VR)

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Sustainability in Calabrian Agri-Food Businesses. A Case Study Analysis

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According to recent studies, personal values passed down through generations are what drive family businesses toward sustainability. Family businesses are the most widespread business form in Italy, a characteristic also found in the Calabria Region. Therefore, it is essential to understand the factors that drive these types of businesses toward business decisions that promote the achievement of sustainable development goals. Regarding family businesses, the link between them and sustainability has not yet received adequate attention in the literature, despite its significant economic, environmental, and social impact on a global scale. Given this background, this study proposes a theoretical investigation into the connection between the family businesses under analysis and the concept of sustainability. The latter tends to distance itself from the well-known definition espoused by the Brundtland Report, focusing instead on the prospect of value creation for the region of origin and for future generations who will lead the business. After a theoretical overview of the topic, four exploratory case studies of family-run agri-food companies operating in Calabria will be presented. The objective is to evaluate the sustainable path undertaken by the selected companies, based on the ethics and values that distinguish the families' business practices.

Key Words: Sustainability, Family Businesses, Case Study, Calabria.

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Public administrations as delivery companies: efficiency, innovation and public value from an economic-business perspective

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Public administrations (PAs) are a cornerstone of the economic and social system, acting not only as regulatory and redistributive entities but also as service-oriented organizations aimed at generating public value. From a business economics perspective, PAs can be analyzed using management tools and models adapted to the specific characteristics of the public sector. This paper offers a theoretical and practical reflection on the application of concepts such as management control, strategic planning, performance measurement, and accountability within public administrations. It explores the distinction between output, outcome, and impact, referencing evaluation systems used in Italy and internationally. Special attention is given to contemporary challenges, including process digitalization, the integration of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria, and the need for managerial transformation in the public sector. The analysis highlights how economic efficiency, transparency, and sustainability can coexist with public missions, contributing to the development of a modern, responsible, and citizen-oriented public administration. The paper concludes with a reflection on future perspectives, emphasizing the importance of an organizational culture based on evaluation, innovation, and civic participation.

Key Words: Public Administration, Business Economics, Public Value, Performance, Digitalization, Managerialization



The “Riace Model”: Utopia And Reality Of Cultural Integration

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Contemporary migration flows, driven by wars, famines, climate change, and deep global inequalities, represent one of the most pressing challenges of the twenty-first century. Every year, thousands of people embark on journeys of hope across the Mediterranean, often in extreme and perilous conditions, seeking survival and dignity. Within this global context, the Calabrian village of Riace has emerged as a symbolic laboratory of integration and cultural regeneration, inspired by the vision of Domenico “Mimmo” Lucano, former mayor and founder of a community-based model of hospitality rooted in solidarity, inclusion, and everyday coexistence between locals and migrants. The so-called Riace model demonstrated how cultural exchange and contamination can become social, economic, and symbolic resources capable of reviving a territory marked by depopulation and economic decline. However, its sustainability remains fragile: in a structurally weak economy such as Calabria’s, the project relies on limited public funding and unstable political support. On social, environmental, and economic levels, Riace reveals a dual potential — it could inspire new forms of intercultural coexistence and local development, yet also exposes the vulnerabilities of a fragile balance in the absence of a solid economic foundation. Looking forward, the model might evolve toward cultural and responsible tourism, turning diversity itself into a source of attraction and dialogue. Suspended between utopia and reality, Riace and the figure of Lucano embody both the inspiration and the contradictions of a model that continues to question the meaning of hospitality, citizenship, and coexistence in the contemporary Mediterranean.

Key Words: Migration, Integration, Riace, Lucano, Cultural Contamination

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Cultural and Territorial Fusion in the Halal Economy: Towards a New Mediterranean Governance of Tourism, Food, and Certification Industries

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La fusion entre culture et territoire façonne désormais les dynamiques économiques contemporaines, en particulier dans les industries halal de l'alimentation, du tourisme et de la certification. Cet article étudie comment l'identité culturelle et la gouvernance territoriale interagissent pour produire de la valeur et renforcer l'authenticité au sein des espaces méditerranéens tels que le Maroc, l'Espagne, l'Italie et la Turquie. En mobilisant les approches de l'économie culturelle, du développement territorial et de la gouvernance institutionnelle, l'étude montre que l'économie halal dépasse son cadre religieux pour devenir un système d'innovation, de durabilité et de valorisation interculturelle. La certification halal apparaît non seulement comme un outil de normalisation et de confiance, mais aussi comme une institution culturelle redéfinissant la compétitivité locale et la cohésion sociale. L'analyse comparative démontre comment les territoires méditerranéens transforment leur diversité culturelle et leur patrimoine historique en atout économique stratégique, favorisant une consommation éthique, un tourisme inclusif et une résilience territoriale. L'économie halal s'affirme ainsi comme un modèle de synergie culture-territoire conciliant tradition et modernité, performance et légitimité morale.

The fusion of culture and territory is now shaping contemporary economic dynamics, particularly in the halal food, tourism, and certification industries. This article examines how cultural identity and territorial governance interact to generate value and strengthen authenticity within Mediterranean spaces such as Morocco, Spain, Italy, and Turkey. By drawing on approaches from cultural economics, territorial development, and institutional governance, the study shows that the halal economy transcends its religious framework to become a system of innovation, sustainability, and intercultural valorization. Halal certification emerges not only as a tool for standardization and building trust, but also as a cultural institution redefining local competitiveness and social cohesion. The comparative analysis demonstrates how Mediterranean territories are transforming their cultural diversity and historical heritage into strategic economic assets, fostering ethical consumption, inclusive tourism, and territorial resilience. The halal economy is thus establishing itself as a model of culture-territory synergy reconciling tradition and modernity, performance and moral legitimacy.

Key Words:

Économie Halal , Développement Territorial , Patrimoine Culturel , Certification ; Méditerranée Tourisme Et Gastronomie ;
Halal Economy, Territorial Development, Cultural Heritage, Certification; Mediterranean Tourism And Gastronomy

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Agribusiness and innovation in olive growing: the breeding program of University of Bari

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The transition of olive growing toward the super-high-density (SHD) growing system represents one of the most significant innovations in the modern olive industry, aimed at reducing production costs, increasing mechanization, and ensuring long-term sustainability to face climate and market challenges. The University of Bari, in collaboration with Agromillora Iberia, has developed three new low-vigor olive cultivars, specifically bred for SHD orchards. 'Lecciana', derived from Leccino × Arbosana, combines upright growth, moderate vigor, and early bearing (third year after planting) with high yield efficiency, allowing densities above 1,200 trees·ha⁻¹ and fully mechanized management. It exhibits excellent frost resistance, low pistil abortion, and, notably, tolerance to *Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *pauca*, key traits for resilience. Rich in oleic acid and polyphenols (> 450 mg kg⁻¹), its oils are classified as extra virgin and nutraceutical, eligible for EFSA health claims, providing strong added value and consumer appeal. 'Coriana', distinguished by a semi-dwarfing canopy and firm mesocarp, shows an optimal balance between fruit detachment force and weight, ensuring high mechanical harvesting efficiency with over-the-row machines and minimizing pruning costs thanks to reduced topping needs. The oils show an appreciated flavors complexity. 'Elviana', with its larger fruit size and double-purpose aptitude for both oil and table use, enhances market diversification and product flexibility while maintaining high and consistent yields. All three cultivars were included in the Italian varieties list, serving as reliable options for new-generation orchards, in organic farming as well. From an economic perspective, their adoption can reduce production costs by up to 50% compared with intensive systems, enabling full mechanization and improving profitability while lowering the environmental footprint. Overall, 'Lecciana', 'Coriana' and 'Elviana' represent a strategic advancement in Italian olive agribusiness, offering a sustainable and competitive solution that aligns with the evolving demands of the global olive oil sector and supports the ecological and economic resilience of Mediterranean agriculture.

Key Words: Mediterranean agriculture, Olive Industry, Lecciana, *Xylella fastidiosa* subsp.

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Real-Time Monitoring of Urban Water Quality Using Smart Sensor Systems: Vlora Case Study

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This study presents an academic research project addressing the quality and distribution of drinking water in the city of Vlora, Albania, with a particular focus on compliance with World Health Organization (WHO) standards. The project stems from increasing concerns over the reliability, safety, and performance of the local water distribution system, which is facing growing challenges due to urban expansion and rising demands from residents and tourists. By combining theoretical frameworks, empirical methods, and experimental analysis, the study seeks to assess the microbiological and chemical parameters of drinking water at various points of the distribution system—from primary catchments and storage tanks to distribution pipelines. Findings from the monitoring phase reveal significant discrepancies in water quality, particularly salinity spikes during periods of high sea activity, indicating seawater intrusion into freshwater sources. This has raised public concerns about the water's safety for consumption and domestic use. The study further highlights a lack of consumer trust and institutional preparedness to address potential risks effectively. Through the integration of advanced ICT tools and the expertise of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Vlora, the research proposes forming expert groups to develop and adopt innovative, low-cost treatment and monitoring solutions. The study includes the development of detailed mapping of contamination zones and salinity levels, which will inform the design of tailored interventions such as localized desalination systems. Ultimately, the project aims to contribute to improving public health and environmental sustainability by offering data-driven, context-specific recommendations for enhancing the city's water infrastructure. It also serves as a model for involving academic institutions in solving real-world environmental challenges.

Key Words: Drinking Water Quality, Water Distribution System, Salinity Monitoring, ICT-Based Environmental Analysis, Urban Water Infrastructure

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ORGANIZED CRIME AND ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION IN ALBANIA

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Organized crime is one of the biggest challenges for Albanian society, affecting not only public security, but also state, economic and social structures. In Albania, this phenomenon has taken on significant proportions, especially after the 1990s, appearing not only in the form of structured criminal groups, but also through penetration into other spheres of public life, such as politics, administration and the construction sector. Illegal construction has become over the years not only an urban planning problem, but also an efficient tool for money laundering, corruption and strengthening control over the territory of criminal groups.

Illegal constructions, often tolerated or legalized through controversial decisions, have become a phenomenon that goes beyond the limits of disregard for urban planning regulations. They represent a powerful mechanism for the activity of organized criminal groups, directly influencing the composition of the informal economy, the concentration of criminal capital and the deformation of the process of legalization and urban planning.

This paper aims to analyze the link between organized crime and illegal construction in Albania, identifying the ways in which criminal activities take advantage of legal and institutional gaps to invest or legitimize illegal income through the construction sector. Illegal constructions, often in areas of economic or tourist interest, are not simply violations of urban planning regulations, but can be indicators of the involvement of criminal elements in the economy.

The aim of this presentation is to address and to analyze the form and extent of the involvement of criminal groups in illegal constructions; To identify the ways in which construction is used for money laundering and economic influence; To examine the legal framework and practical implementation of the law in the field of urban planning and organized crime; To analyze the role and interaction of institutions such as municipalities, courts against corruption and organized crime, the prosecution, the police, and legalization agencies; To propose legal and institutional measures to strengthen institutional control and combat construction of criminal origin.

Key Words: Organized Crime; Illegal Construction; Money Laundering; Corruption of High-Ranking Officials; Territorial Institutional Control.

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Convergence between accounting harmonization and accrual accounting in Italy

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Convergence between accounting harmonization and accrual accounting in Italy Over the past two decades, European public accounting has undergone a structural transformation of unprecedented scale and depth. This evolution has been driven by a growing demand for transparency, international comparability, and enhanced accountability—both to citizens and supranational institutions. Within this context, two reform trajectories have acquired strategic importance that is increasingly difficult to ignore: on the one hand, accounting harmonization, regarded as essential for constructing a shared financial language capable of addressing fragmentation and legal heterogeneity; on the other, the adoption of accrual accounting, which expands the scope of financial representation beyond the confines of traditional cash-based or authorization-focused approaches. Italy represents a particularly emblematic case of progressive convergence between these two reform paths. With Legislative Decree No. 118/2011, the country initiated a comprehensive overhaul of the accounting systems of regional and local authorities. Furthermore, within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, Italy has set a target of establishing—by 2026—a unified accrual-based accounting system fully aligned with international standards and European guidelines (EPSAS). This process goes far beyond the mere technical transposition of rules: it represents a key test for the public sector's ability to reorganize its knowledge base, information systems, and management structures from an integrated perspective. The analysis—based on a comparative approach that combines the examination of national and European regulatory frameworks with a systematic review of scientific and technical literature—has made it possible to identify both enabling factors and critical challenges associated with these two reform trajectories. Structural obstacles remain, such as cultural resistance to change, the complexities of valuing public assets, and the significant risk of reducing innovation to mere formal compliance. At the same time, positive drivers are emerging, including the adoption of common standards, the evolution of information systems, and targeted investments in the development of professional competencies. The operational and strategic implications clearly extend beyond the national level. They point to a model of convergence between harmonization and accrual accounting which—if pursued gradually yet decisively—can not only consolidate transparency and strengthen governance capacity, but also enhance institutional credibility in an increasingly interconnected and internationally benchmarked environment.

Key Words: Transparency; Accounting harmonization; Accrual accounting; Public administration; EPSAS

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Roots tourism and local development: the role of public investment in high-migration municipalities

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Quantifying tourism, both in terms of its numerical dimension and its economic impact on society, has always been a complex challenge. In particular, when we leave the visible realm of official accommodations, we enter a tourism—defined as "hidden"—that eludes conventional metrics but fuels significant travel and consumption. Many of these movements interact with return tourism, better known as roots tourism: a phenomenon that has historically involved the southern and northeastern regions of Italy, with emigrants and descendants maintaining a strong connection with their place of origin. However, generational changes, residential distances, and the differences between urban or foreign life and small, marginalized towns risk weakening this connection, unless targeted public interventions are implemented. In this context, the study aims to answer the following research question (RQ): to what extent can local public investments (in infrastructure, cultural and tourism services, and accessibility) stimulate return flows and translate into economic benefits for municipalities with a significant presence of emigrants registered with AIRE? The methodology involves the use of official datasets—from ISTAT and Territorial Public Accounts sources—integrated with demographic and migration indicators. It is expected that, where investments are well-calibrated and oriented toward services, heritage, and territorial identity, local tourism can serve as a driver of development, not only symbolic but also economic. The implications for policy are clear: local authorities should recognize local tourism as a strategic resource to be enhanced, planning targeted spending for services, accessibility, cultural promotion, and the preservation of local identity. From a managerial perspective, municipal and local governments can direct projects and calls for proposals toward initiatives that promote history, culture, and return, encouraging the involvement of communities abroad, food and wine initiatives, cultural events, and thematic tourist itineraries.

Key Words: Roots Tourism, Public Investment, Local Development;

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Artificial Intelligence, Agronomic Modeling, and Emerging Crops: A Systematic Review on Pathways for Sustainable Agriculture

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Digital agriculture has rapidly evolved into a cornerstone for tackling global challenges such as climate change, food security, and sustainable land management. Its convergence with artificial intelligence, agronomic modeling, and emerging crops like Cannabis sativa for medical purposes highlights new opportunities for both productivity and territorial development. This systematic review examines peer-reviewed studies published between 2000 and 2025, identified through Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, AGRIS, and CAB Abstracts, complemented by policy reports from FAO, OECD, and the European Commission. Following PRISMA 2020 guidelines, the selection process targeted contributions in English and Italian addressing machine learning, deep learning, crop models, and novel crops. Findings reveal that artificial intelligence, particularly convolutional and recurrent neural networks as well as recent transformer architectures, has improved predictive accuracy in yield estimation, water and nutrient stress detection, and pest surveillance. However, most models rely on small-scale experimental datasets, which limits their scalability and generalizability. Crop modeling systems such as DSSAT, APSIM, STICS, and AquaCrop remain central to simulating crop–soil–climate interactions. Advances in data assimilation techniques, integrating satellite-derived indices and ground-based sensors, have increased robustness and enabled the first applications of agricultural digital twins, capable of real-time scenario analysis. Emerging crops, and especially medical cannabis, illustrate both opportunities and constraints: they offer diversification and high economic value, but are also associated with high energy consumption in indoor facilities and regulatory uncertainty. Innovative solutions based on IoT platforms and blockchain systems have been developed to enhance monitoring, transparency, and supply-chain traceability. Overall, the literature confirms that the combined use of artificial intelligence, crop models, and emerging crops can serve as a powerful driver of sustainable agricultural and territorial development. However, persistent gaps include methodological heterogeneity, limited interoperability between platforms, and uneven access to digital tools across rural areas. Future research should focus on creating open interoperable datasets, scaling hybrid AI-modeling frameworks into operational digital twin systems, and designing inclusive policies that reduce the digital divide. Only through a systemic integration of technological innovation, environmental sustainability, and social equity can digital agriculture fully realize its potential as an engine of resilient and inclusive territorial transformation.

Key Words: Data assimilation, Digital twins, Remote sensing, Machine learning, IoT-based monitoring, Blockchain traceability

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Carob tree (*Ceratonia siliqua* L.) as a strategic crop for Mediterranean agribusiness and climate-resilient value chains

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Carob tree (*Ceratonia siliqua* L.) is gaining renewed attention as a resilient crop and a strategic component of Mediterranean agri-food systems. Once considered a marginal species, carob now represents an agronomic, environmental, and economic opportunity in the context of climate change, soil degradation, and the need for diversification in areas affected by emerging diseases such as *Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *pauca* (Xfp). Its intrinsic drought tolerance, minimal water requirements, and adaptability to poor soils makes it a promising alternative for semi-arid regions increasingly challenged by desertification and the decline of traditional crops, such as olive and almond. A recent GIS-based land suitability study conducted in Xfp-affected areas assessed the potential distribution of alternative tree species, integrating climatic and pedological variables. Among all candidates, carob exhibited the broadest ecological suitability, with over 260,000 ha identified as highly favorable for cultivation, confirming its remarkable capacity to combine environmental resilience with productive potential. Parallel research activities across Italy and Spain have deepened the agronomic understanding of this species, focusing both on high pulp content for human consumption (the local genotype ‘Amele di Bari’ in Apulia) and on new hermaphroditic cultivars with high seed production, early bearing and high yield efficiency (the new ‘e-13P’ and ‘e-14P’ in the Balearic Islands and in Spain). From an economic perspective, the establishment of a structured carob value chain is crucial to transforming this renewed agronomic interest into tangible rural development. For these reasons, a new supply chain has begun in Apulia, pushing the carob production to new levels: more than 200 hectares will be planted in the next few years in the Salento area, through a new supply chain oriented to sustainability and efficiency. Meanwhile, another project is focusing its attention on the distribution of highly efficient carob trees in Apulia, filling the gap of having standardized plant material in Italy. The integration of carob production into circular economy models can generate new income opportunities for farmers, promote carbon-neutral cropping systems, and reinforce the Mediterranean identity through the sustainable exploitation of a historically rooted yet future-oriented species.

Key Words: Carob Tree, *Xylella Fastidiosa* Subsp., Integration, Circular Economy

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Roots Tourism and Institutional Resilience: Identity, Governance, and Sustainable Development in Italian Municipalities

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In the context of contemporary global mobility, roots tourism emerges as a distinctive form of return in which genealogies, memories, and senses of belonging are transformed into resources for territorial development and institutional resilience. It goes beyond a purely identity-based practice to become a socio-economic mechanism capable of influencing financial rebalancing and the long-term sustainability of Italian municipalities, particularly those located in small towns and inner areas. From this perspective, the study seeks to answer the following research question (RQ): how does roots tourism, understood as a practice of return and identity reactivation, affect local development processes, and what institutional, economic, and cultural conditions ensure its long-term sustainability? The study pursues a dual objective: first, to analyze how the symbolic dimension of return can be converted into territorial capital and public value; and second, to identify the governance mechanisms and administrative capacities that make such processes durable and inclusive. The adopted methodology is qualitative–interpretive, based on an extensive review of international and national literature, integrated with empirical cases and territorial analysis tools, in order to connect the cultural dimensions of return with the economic and financial variables of municipal resilience. Expected results suggest that where strong administrations and inclusive governance networks exist, roots tourism can activate proximity economies, regenerate the social fabric, and broaden the local tax base, thereby mitigating the vulnerabilities that contribute to municipal default risk. Conversely, in the absence of institutional competence and place-based policies, opportunities remain latent and structural imbalances tend to deepen. The implications for public policy and territorial management are significant: roots tourism should be conceived as a laboratory for public value co-production, where collective memory becomes a common good and a driver of economic stability. The use of data-driven analytical tools, walkability metrics, and predictive models helps guide investment decisions and prevent financial imbalances, transforming return into project and memories into sustainable development. In conclusion, roots tourism represents an interpretative key to understanding the resilience of Italian municipalities, as it bridges belonging and budgeting, identity and governance, fostering shared and enduring growth.

Key Words: Roots Tourism, Local Development, Institutional Resilience

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SOUNDSCAPES OF BELONGING: MUSIC, MEMORY AND EMOTIONAL RETURN

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The paper explores the intersection between music, memory, and identity within the phenomenon of roots tourism, analyzing how soundscapes contribute to reconstructing a sense of belonging among the descendants of Italian emigrants. Adopting an approach that intertwines sociological and anthropological perspectives, the study argues that music functions as a mediator of cultural heritage, redefining travel not as a mere physical displacement but as an emotional and mnemonic journey toward the self and one's origins — a “Proustian voyage” in which sound replaces the madeleine as the key to memory. Based on a qualitative investigation conducted among young members of the Calabrian diaspora residing in Germany, Spain, and the United States, the research examines the evocative power of traditional Italian — particularly Calabrian — music as an intergenerational bridge and as a driver of temporary emotional return. The findings show that music acts as both a mnemonic and emotional device, capable of reactivating personal and collective memories that reconnect individuals with their ancestral homeland. Folk songs and traditional melodies, such as the tarantella, emerge as symbolic spaces of identity negotiation, where nostalgia transforms into an active form of cultural resilience and a motivation for return, even if temporary. The study thus contributes to the broader debate on diasporic identities, proposing the enhancement of musical heritage as a key strategy for the regeneration of ancestral territories and for fostering intercultural and intergenerational dialogue.

Key Words: Roots Tourism, Music, Memory, Nostalgia, Diaspora, Emotional Return

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Roots tourism and Italian citizenship by "iure sanguinis": between reconnecting with one's cultural origins and new forms of belonging and transnational mobility.

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In recent years, more than in the past, Italy has seen a significant growth in demand for both so-called "roots tourism" and requests for "Italian citizenship by descent," coming from the population of Italian origin who live and reside permanently in Italian and foreign places (obviously exclusively foreign in the case of requests for Italian citizenship). The term "roots tourism" refers to the mobility of individuals to places other than their current hometowns, which are their own or their family's hometowns. It is a form of leisure and recreational travel and temporary stay, whose primary purpose is the reconstruction, rediscovery, and valorization of a family's historical and sociocultural identity. Instead, the term "Italian citizenship by descent," also known as "jure sanguinis," refers to the right to obtain Italian citizenship through descent from an Italian ancestor. This is an Italian law enacted in 1991, whose principle is that citizenship is automatically passed from parent to child, without generational limits. The two social phenomena in question are decidedly interconnected and stimulate comparative reflection as they are both based on individuals' desire to reconnect with their cultural origins, particularly Italian ones in the case of the population residing abroad. In any case, they represent an area of study that, also spurred by the increased visibility and growth seen in the last five years, has definitely attracted the attention of social scientists, who are generally interested in the relevant issues that the two phenomena, when intertwined, generate, such as, for example, the question of identity valorization and rediscovery, transnational mobility, the development of new forms of belonging and cultural citizenship, the need for rootedness, and the fluidity of contemporary identities. The specific focus of the work proposed here is clearly defined, and concerns the impacts on local communities of origin generated by the intertwining of these two phenomena. Specifically, the topic to be explored is the push and pull factors that motivate the boom in travel for immigrants and requests for Italian citizenship "jure sanguinis" in Italy in recent years. These factors should essentially be rooted in the idea of reconnecting with one's origins and identity. To this end, several case studies relating to Italian local communities will be used.

Key Words: Italian citizenship; Iure sanguinis; Roots tourism; Diaspora; Transnational mobility; Cultural identity; Migration policies;



The “Programma Gol” in Calabria: Active Labor Policies and Territorial Development Post-PNRR, Opportunities and Risks

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The “Programma Gol” –“ Worker Employability Guarantee” stands out as one of the main innovations in active labor policies introduced by the PNRR, specifically within Mission 5 “Inclusion and Cohesion”, Component 1 “Active Labor Policies and Training”, Reform 1.1. The context under examination is Calabria, characterized by high unemployment rates and significant structural weaknesses that strongly affect the labor market. This contribution aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the GOL Program, focusing both on its structure—organized into five activation pathways aimed at the unemployed, jobseekers, and vulnerable categories—and on its management, expected outcomes, and those actually achieved during the period 2022–2025. The data collected show a significant increase in the number of beneficiaries taken on, as well as the activation of numerous training courses and internships. Furthermore, there has been a strengthening of the collaborative network among Employment Centers, training institutions, and businesses. These elements highlight an increased capacity to respond to local labor market needs and a greater provision of tools for retraining and job placement. However, several critical issues remain that limit its full effectiveness: among these, the most notable are the uneven results across different territories, the precariousness of the contracts initiated, the slowness of bureaucratic processes, and, above all, the risk that beneficiaries may develop a dependency on subsidies rather than a real path toward employment autonomy. These problems represent significant obstacles to achieving the objectives of regenerating the region’s human capital. The overall analysis shows that the GOL Program is a partially effective measure, capable of generating tangible impacts, but at the same time not yet sufficient to promote a structural transformation of Calabria’s human capital. Positive impacts are more evident in urban contexts and among individuals who already possess skills, rather than among the most disadvantaged categories and in inland areas. It would be advisable to link active labor policies to local development strategies, in order to strengthen the direct involvement of businesses, promote youth and female entrepreneurship, and introduce long-term intervention evaluation systems. Only through synergy between training, inclusion policies, and local development will it be possible to overcome the historical challenges of Calabria’s labor market. In conclusion, the GOL Program represents a true laboratory of innovation for the labor market in Calabria. The main challenge remains to trigger a process of human capital regeneration and to promote growth that is truly inclusive and sustainable, capable of deeply influencing the region’s socio-economic dynamics.

Key Words: Programma GOL; active labor policies; Calabria; PNRR; training; employability; human capital; territorial development

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Eros and Aphrodite: seductive food and wine.

Places, cultures, and imagination

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The relationship between seduction and food and wine is a cross-cutting theme that touches on philosophy, anthropology, literature, and sociology. Both practices are rooted in desire and its performance. Food and wine, like eros, transcend their utilitarian function to become an aesthetic, symbolic, and relational experience.

Popular cultures, each in its own region, attribute aphrodisiac properties even to more readily available foods: red meat, raw shellfish, and even plant-based foods, including truffles, ginseng, and chili peppers—not to mention chocolate. Legend has it that Montezuma drank 50 cups of chocolate a day to enhance his copulatory abilities.

Wine, across the board, plays a unique role, mediating between nature and spirit, between materiality and symbolism. Hence its centrality in convivial rituals and the construction of intimacy.

In contemporary times, the relationship between seduction and food and wine is intensified through the media and advertising.

The food served, how it is prepared, and how it is consumed becomes a symbolic text.

Eating together creates social order and identity. The table thus becomes a place for building trust and intimacy, essential elements of seduction.

Food becomes a sign, part of a system of simulacra that replaces experience with its representation.

Thus, the romantic dinner becomes a media archetype. However, when experienced authentically, the food and wine experience retains its original function: uniting body, mind, and culture, seduction, pleasure, and connection.

In this sense, seductive food and wine can be interpreted as a form of relational aesthetics, in which pleasure becomes a tool for building human bonds.

Seductive food and wine therefore operates in that liminal zone where the senses, even before language, determine the relationship with others.

However, is food and wine and its seductive side rooted in specific places and cultures, or can it be abstracted from them? This is one of the questions we will address in our paper, where we will also analyze the possible cross-fertilizations between food and wine, seductive, and imaginary cultures.

Key Words: Seduction, Food And Wine, Desire, Staging, Popular Cultures.

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Enhancement of Minor Sites. City Networks and the National Village Plan of the NRRP

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Italian small villages are the focus of renewed interest from local and national institutions, which see them as new opportunities for sustainable development and growth. They are also at the center of new tourism trends driven by the interest of travelers increasingly seeking authentic experiences in unique places and lesser-known destinations.

The widespread attention toward small towns has also been fostered by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has established these places as safer destinations and ideal for slow and sustainable tourism. Villages are thus becoming protagonists in a rediscovery of Italy's "minor" destinations, in line with the National Strategic Tourism Plan 2017-2022, also to decongest the most popular tourist destinations.

However, most small Italian villages face many critical issues, such as constant depopulation, which threatens the very existence of the town. To reverse this trend and repopulate the small centres, targeted public policies have been implemented in recent years to support small municipalities (Snai, the "Salva Borghi" law), as well as several tourism promotion initiatives launched by dedicated associations, such as the Most Beautiful Villages in Italy, the Club of Authentic Villages of Italy, and the Cittaslow network. Among these, the PNRR's Villages Call has been particularly noteworthy, if only for the great volume of funding it provides.

Many Italian cities belonging to these territorial networks have participated in local calls for proposals related to the NRRP, with their specific characteristics and attention to historical and cultural heritage.

The paper, by reviewing the project proposals of cities participating in these networks, funded by the National Villages Plan, aims to investigate development prospects in these contexts through the promotion of quality tourism, as a means of combating abandonment, in line with the objectives of the NRRP.

Key Words: NRRP, Enhancement, Minor Sites, Sustainable Tourism, Territorial Networks.

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Depopulation and Regeneration in Italian Villages: The Case of “Abita Comuni Montani Calabria”

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This paper aims to analyze the causes and effects of depopulation in Italian villages, discussing the trajectories of territorial regeneration examined from a legal and economic perspective. The trend observed from the last century to the present has been characterized by a demographic shift toward broader and external areas of the country, where globalization, industrialization, and socio-economic and cultural development have provided inhabitants with significant prospects for social and professional growth. This phenomenon has led to the marginalization of many inland areas, which today face extreme fragility in economic, social, cultural, and essential service terms (education, healthcare, mobility, connectivity). The consequence of this anthropological evolution has created a deep fracture within the country—not only a vertical one between the developed northern regions and the underdeveloped southern ones, but also a horizontal one between large external areas and small internal ones. In light of these challenges, recent years have seen growing attention toward territorial regeneration and sustainable local development policies. The key idea is to reverse the vicious cycle of demographic decline through a neo-endogenous development approach, which in regional science refers to a virtuous combination between local forces (landscape, cultural heritage, traditional knowledge including food and wine culture, social capital) and external forces (new residents, investors, supra-local institutions) that bring in skills, capital, and innovation. In this way, territorial regeneration becomes a participatory and multi-level process, fully integrated into the debate on cultural contamination and territorial integration. The present paper adopts as a case study the experimental public call “Abita Comuni Montani Calabria”. This initiative, launched by the Calabria Region, aims to counter depopulation and revitalize small mountain municipalities through a neo-endogenous approach oriented toward repopulating villages by attracting new residents. The international conference “Contamination, Assimilation, and Integration” focuses precisely on how the blending of cultures and territories can positively influence local economies, gastronomy, and tourism. In depopulated villages, the arrival of people from other regions or countries represents an opportunity for cultural exchange: contamination as mutual enrichment (for example, through new entrepreneurial ideas or gastronomic fusions), assimilation as the gradual integration of newcomers into the social fabric, and integration as harmonious and inclusive coexistence. The paper discusses the impact of cultural contamination on gastronomy, tourism, and local services, highlighting potential spillover effects on employment, attractiveness, and community resilience.

Key Words: Villages, Depopulation, Revitalization, Territorial Regeneration, Entrepreneurial Migration,

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Contamination, Integration, and Global Transformations. The Mediterranean Heritage as an Interpretative Lens

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The current socioeconomic landscape is being profoundly reshaped by dynamics of contamination, assimilation, and integration that synergistically impact the economic, food, and wine sectors, and tourism. Uninterrupted demographic flows—exacerbated by conflicts, structural migrations, pandemic emergencies, and climate change—are acting as catalysts for a reconfiguration of the social and cultural geographies of territories. This process is not neutral; it significantly shapes established customs, habits, and, ultimately, potential development trajectories. The intersection of cultures, far from being a simple juxtaposition, is a generator of innovation and a driver of new spheres of dialogue and exchange, but at the same time poses complex challenges related to social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and collective social responsibility. The choice to anchor this reflection in the Mediterranean and its concept of "inner Mediterranean" represents a rediscovery of the millennia-old history of a maritime basin that has been the quintessential crossroads of civilizations, languages, peoples, and religious beliefs. Within this historical matrix, trade routes, agricultural practices, artisanal skills, and culinary traditions have been intricately intertwined, significantly anticipating the phenomena we now identify with the term globalization. The cultural influences that developed here have given rise to models of coexistence and advanced forms of production, while also generating narratives of identity that continue to shape local economies and community structures. Today, faced with systemic and accelerated change, the Mediterranean heritage presents an exceptionally valuable hermeneutic lens for analyzing how intercultural encounters impact agri-food production, stimulate entrepreneurial creativity, enhance the quality of tourism, and contribute to the construction of new paradigms of the circular economy. In this evolution, the role of women is crucial: they embody the ability to harmonize care and innovation, memory and vision projected into the future. Including a female perspective in this analysis means elevating the issues of social responsibility and sustainability from ancillary elements to essential and foundational pillars of all lasting development. The Women's States General therefore intend to propose this reflection as a political and cultural act aimed at attributing intrinsic value to cross-fertilization and integration, no longer perceived as threatening or destabilizing elements, but as generative opportunities for building resilient and fully inclusive communities.

Key Words: Women, Mediterranean, Heritage, Innovation, Development

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Which Type of Food Consumer Have We Become? Evolving Food Consumption Patterns in Times of Polycrisis: Insights from a Five-Year Study on Italian Consumers

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The now distant COVID-19 pandemic was the first and most disruptive in a series of consecutive crises that have profoundly affected consumer social dynamics and reshaped domestic routines over the past five years. From the shortage of raw materials and the energy shock to rising staple prices, inflation, and trade tariffs, these events collectively transformed the ways people sourced and consumed food, both at home and outside. Campaigns promoting cautious and caring lifestyles, together with the rediscovery of time spent in the kitchen and a renewed interest in cooking and eating, reshaped consumers' taste preferences, food priorities, and everyday purchasing behaviours. This calls for closer attention to how food habits, dietary styles, and taste patterns have evolved in recent years – and how they mirror broader, value-driven priorities and emerging consumer trends. Building on this awareness, the paper presents a five-year repeated study conducted on a convenience sample of Italian consumers. Through multivariate exploratory analyses, it outlines the evolving latent factors shaping taste and provides a profiling of consumer clusters, tracing their transformation from the post-pandemic phase to the current, increasingly polarized, de-globalization scenario.

Key Words: Food Consumer Patterns; Polycrisis; Evolving Taste Patterns; Exploratory Multivariate Analysis; Consumer Profile Clusters.

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The Role of Cooperatives in Strengthening Agricultural Value Chains and Rural Development: Insights from Albania with a Regional Comparison

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Agricultural cooperatives are critical institutions that enhance the position of smallholder farmers within agricultural value chains and promote sustainable rural development. In Albania, the agribusiness sector is dominated by small, fragmented farms with limited access to markets, finance, technology, and bargaining power. These structural constraints highlight the need for collective action mechanisms to improve efficiency, competitiveness, and resilience. Cooperatives can facilitate resource pooling, enhance input supply, improve product quality, enable collective marketing, and foster innovation. Despite supportive legal frameworks, cooperative development in Albania remains slow due to historical mistrust, weak governance, limited managerial capacities, and low farmer engagement. Comparative analysis with neighboring Western Balkan countries, including North Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia, demonstrates that institutional support, policy coherence, and market integration are key success factors. Strengthening cooperatives could serve as a catalyst for rural development through increased incomes, diversification, job creation, adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, and empowerment of women and youth. This theoretical paper provides an in-depth analysis of the role of cooperatives in agricultural value chains, examines structural and socio-economic barriers in Albania, and draws regional lessons to guide policy and strategy for a more competitive and inclusive agribusiness sector.

Key Word: Agricultural cooperatives, value chains, rural development, Albania, Western Balkans.

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Innovation as a Catalyst for Agrobusiness Competitiveness and Rural Development: Regional Perspectives from the Western Balkans

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This paper presents a comprehensive theoretical and regional analysis of innovation in agrobusiness, emphasizing competitiveness, sustainability, and rural development in the Western Balkans. Innovation is addressed as a multidimensional phenomenon, including technological, organizational, marketing, and policy dimensions, which together contribute to the modernization and transformation of agricultural value chains. Drawing on Schumpeterian innovation theory, Rogers’ diffusion model, and the Triple Helix concept, the paper explores how innovation drives productivity, efficiency, and market integration while fostering rural transformation. It highlights the role of technological advancements such as precision agriculture, digital platforms, and mechanization, alongside organizational innovations like cooperatives, clusters, and public-private partnerships. Regional examples from Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Bosnia & Herzegovina illustrate diverse adoption strategies, successes, and challenges, reflecting differences in farm structures, policy environments, and access to resources. The paper also examines institutional frameworks, policy measures, and support mechanisms that influence innovation uptake. Policy implications and strategic recommendations are provided to enhance innovation-driven growth, strengthen competitiveness, and promote sustainable and inclusive development in the agrobusiness sector.

Key Words: Agrobusiness, Innovation, Competitiveness, Rural Development, Western Balkans

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The Prohibition of Financial Assistance in Public-Participated Companies: Limits, Objectives and Governance Implications

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Public-participated companies represent an essential tool through which public administrations pursue policy objectives and provide collective services. Yet, the persistent financial distress of many of these entities has raised crucial legal and economic questions regarding the legitimacy of public support. Italian law has addressed this issue by prohibiting financial assistance, which prevents public bodies from using public funds to rescue loss-making companies under their control. This rule, introduced by Decree-Law No. 78/2010 and consolidated in Article 14(5) of Legislative Decree No. 175/2016 (TUSP), marks a shift from the traditional logic of “unconditional bail-outs” toward the principles of sound public finance, market discipline, and accountability. Under Article 14(5) of the TUSP, public administrations are prohibited from subscribing new capital, granting guarantees, or providing extraordinary transfers to companies that have recorded losses for three consecutive financial years or have utilised reserves to cover these losses. The only exceptions permitted concern interventions aimed at restoring the minimum share capital, provided that a qualified recovery plan is adopted, demonstrating the prospect of regaining economic efficiency and financial balance within three years. In the absence of such a plan, any transfer of funds constitutes an unlawful assumption of the company’s liabilities, thereby breaching the principle of limited liability and potentially generating accounting and managerial liability. The Italian Court of Auditors has repeatedly clarified that this prohibition is not merely a financial restriction but a fundamental instrument to safeguard public resources and prevent their misuse through disguised debt assumption. For public auditors and local government reviewers, compliance with Article 14(5) TUSP requires proactive monitoring, verification of the objective triggers of crisis, and critical assessment of the legality and sustainability of any proposed intervention. Ultimately, the ban on financial assistance embodies the constitutional principles of transparency, efficiency, and separation between public budgets and entrepreneurial risk. It promotes a culture of responsible governance and sustainable management within publicly owned enterprises, aligning the protection of public finances with the legitimate interests in service continuity and market neutrality.

Key Words: Public-Participated Companies, Financial Assistance Prohibition, Corporate Governance

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The richness of human capital to combat economic and social inequalities

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Faced with a world embroiled in war and climate change, we feel the need for an increasingly creative, generous, and less individualistic economic actor. Generosity also includes volunteer work, that is, generosity, which must also be present in the workplace, through passion. Only in this way can one grow as a person and, consequently, society as a whole. It goes without saying that human capital should not be considered in a mechanistic sense, because that would be to undermine the essence of humanity. This article will seek to understand human capital and its crucial importance in eliminating inequalities and fostering social and economic growth. The topic of economic development has always interested scholars and policy makers. When differences exist, investing in human capital is one way to increase the productive factors used in the production process. This investment can be achieved through education and training. Naturally, a poor education doesn't increase human capital; in fact, it can even lead to losses, just like a bad financial investment. Directly linked to human capital is the concept of equality, because only by eliminating inequalities can social justice be achieved. All these aspects will be described in the article.

Key Words: Human capital, inequality, economic growth

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Psychological Consequences Among Young People During Criminal Proceedings

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This study investigates the multifaceted psychological consequences faced by young individuals aged 18–21 during criminal proceedings and periods of incarceration within the Albanian penitentiary system. Situated at a critical developmental stage, these youths experience a complex intersection of emotional, cognitive, and social challenges that heighten their vulnerability to psychological distress. The paper situates these experiences within the broader socio-economic context of Albania, where migration, poverty, and limited access to mental health resources further exacerbate the psychosocial impact of judicial processes and imprisonment. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study employed semi-structured interviews with detained youths, supplemented by in-depth consultations with psychologists, social workers, and legal professionals. This methodological triangulation allowed for a comprehensive exploration of lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and systemic shortcomings within detention environments. The findings reveal pervasive symptoms of anxiety, depression, trauma, and social withdrawal, often reinforced by inadequate prison conditions, stigmatization, and the absence of sustained rehabilitative programs. Moreover, the transitional instability associated with internal and external migration emerged as a critical factor amplifying emotional and behavioral disturbances. The analysis underscores an urgent need for a multidimensional policy approach that integrates psychological care with social and legal reform. Enhancing mental health services in correctional institutions, ensuring humane detention standards, and implementing community-based preventive programs are identified as strategic priorities. These measures would not only promote psychological resilience and personal rehabilitation but also contribute to reducing recidivism and facilitating successful reintegration into society. The study ultimately advocates for the recognition of young offenders as a psychologically at-risk group requiring targeted intervention and long-term institutional commitment to mental health within the criminal justice framework.

Key Words: Criminal Proceedings, Mental Health, Migration, Isolation, Rehabilitation, Youth.

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Active Ageing and Mobility Inequalities in Italy: Evidence from a National Survey of Older Adults

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Background and Objectives

This study examines the correlation between aging, health, mobility, and digital inclusion among Italians aged 65 and older, within the framework of the national programme “Ageing Well in an Ageing Society.” The objectives are to (1) evaluate the physical, functional, and digital autonomy of older adults; (2) identify territorial and social disparities affecting mobility and access to services; and (3) provide evidence to inform inclusive and age-friendly transportation policies.

Methods

A CATI survey that was representative of the whole country was done between September 30 and October 17, 2025. It included 1,560 people aged 65 and older, divided by gender, age group, and where they lived. The survey had a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$.

Results

The most common way to get around is still by private car (48.2%), but independence drops sharply with age, going from 65.5% for people 65 to 69 years old to 1.7% for people 85 and older. Seventy-six percent of respondents say their health is good or very good, but people who are 80 or older feel less well and less free, especially in rural and southern areas. Digital inclusion is still limited: 39% of people never use smartphones or the Internet to find travel information. This shows big gaps between generations and regions. Only 4% of people use local public transportation (LPT) every day, and 43% never use it. The main problems are long wait times (33.6%), services that don't happen very often, and stops that are far away. People are moderately happy with LPT (average score 5.9/10), but 61% want services to be more frequent and easier to get to. During the day, 86% of people think that pedestrians are safe, but this number drops to 66% at night, especially among older people and in less urban areas.

Research contribution

Italian seniors are still able to move around and be social, but their independence is becoming more limited by age, location, and the digital divide. Reliance on private vehicles and restricted access to public transportation reveal structural and territorial disparities. Policies should focus on making services more frequent, easier to get to, and closer; creating on-demand and phone-based transportation options; and improving digital literacy to make mobility safer, fairer, and more age-friendly for older people.

Key Words: Active ageing, Mobility, Digital inclusion, Public transport, Territorial inequalities, The elderly

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Environmental Taxation, Governance and Organisational Innovation: A New Paradigm of Corporate Resilience

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In the current economic and institutional context, increasingly shaped by new paradigms of ecological transition, environmental taxation plays a strategic role within the framework of the European Union and in the policy choices of its Member States, which rely on tax instruments to drive citizens and firms towards the adoption of more sustainable and adaptive models in the face of emerging global crises. Environmental taxation, grounded in the EU “polluter pays” principle designed to internalize environmental costs, encompasses a set of tax instruments aimed at discouraging polluting behaviors and promoting an efficient use of resources and the adoption of green technologies. On this basis, this paper investigates how processes of assimilation of national tax systems to the European Union’s policy framework affect firms’ competitiveness and strategic choices, and what impact they have on the balance between economic growth and sustainable development. Drawing on a legal-economic analysis aimed at exploring the role of environmental taxes from a green perspective and in view of the development of a more homogeneous regulatory framework at EU level, the authors examine the conditions under which environmental taxation can evolve from a mere regulatory constraint into a driver of organisational innovation, in line with the sustainability and ecological and digital transition objectives promoted by the European Union in responding to the environmental crisis.

Key Words: Environmental Taxation - Organisational Innovation - Corporate Resilience - Environmental Crisis - Green Technology

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Culinary Multilingualism as a Bridge Across Cultures

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The domain of culinary nomenclature represents a dynamic intersection of individual expression and collective identity. In this field the individuality is eminent and solidarity prevails, the tradition is honored and creativity remains vibrant; origins are preserved and integration is encouraged, cultures are mutually enriched, fostering friendship among peoples. Culinary nomenclature bears the imprint of history, culture, tradition, lifestyle and modes of living, socio-cultural interferences, social phenomena, and all elements intrinsically linked to the life of a people, nation, or community.

An examination of Albanian culinary traditions immediately reveals the profound influence of the Ottoman Empire over five centuries. An examination of the culinary traditions in Albania's southernmost regions highlights the strong cultural interferences stemming from continuous contact with the Greek population, particularly among the Cham Albanians. The same phenomenon is evident among the Albanians of Kosovo, shaped by sustained interaction with Serbian culture; among the Albanians of North Macedonia, influenced by their proximity to the Macedonian population; and among the Albanians of Montenegro, through contact with Montenegrins. Similarly, one can observe the enduring imprint of Italian influence along the coastal regions of Vlorë, Durrës, Lezhë, and Shkodër.

The naming of culinary dishes are deeply intertwined with the language of the human spirit expressing personal preference, ambition, temporality, spatiality, contextual nuance etc.

Culinary multilingualism reveals a spectrum of worldviews in which diverse mentalities converge and multiple interpretations of reality coexist within the modern era. A typical illustration can be found in restaurant menus across the globe, which reflect patterns of human mobility, intercultural relations, and above all the influence of social phenomena on the language of gastronomy.

Key Words: Culinary Language, Multilingualism, Cultural Intersection, Linguistic Solidarity.

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Contamination, Assimilation, and Integration: How the fusion of cultures and territories influences the economy, food, wine, and tourism in the Mediterranean

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The goal is to develop a conceptual framework capable of articulating these dynamics within a systemic perspective, characterized by the continuous interaction between semiotic, technological, and socio-cultural levels.

In this epistemological framework, communicative contamination is analyzed as a process of interference and convergence between heterogeneous codes, formats, and symbolic protocols. It operates as a disruptive mechanism that generates unexpected variations in the processes of production and circulation of meaning, activating hybrid forms of communication and trans-coding phenomena that challenge the stability of traditional models.

Assimilation is interpreted as an internal regulatory device through which a communication system, exposed to external inputs, implements decoding, filtering, and restructuring procedures consistent with its own operational logic. This process leads to the reformulation of semantic maps, the updating of expressive repertoires, and the reconfiguration of relationships between medium, content, and recipients.

Finally, integration is examined as the phase of systemic stabilization in which assimilated elements are permanently incorporated into the communication architecture, generating more complex and adaptive structures. Integration does not imply homogenization, but rather the system's ability to redistribute differences and novelties within new structures of coherence, expanding its informational and evolutionary potential.

The conference therefore aims to offer communication researchers, practitioners, and scholars an advanced interpretative framework useful for understanding the nature and direction of ongoing transformations. Through interdisciplinary contributions and diverse methodological approaches, the event aims to outline innovative lines of analysis and stimulate critical discussion on the metamorphoses of communication systems in today's global ecosystem.

Key Words: Contamination, Assimilation, Integration, Mediterranean

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ABSTRACTS BOOK

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Centro Ricerche e Studi Turismo

Cultural and territorial contamination, assimilation, and integration are profoundly transforming the economy, food and wine, and tourism, generating synergies that enhance local identities and expand their international appeal. Cultural contamination manifests itself in the fusion of culinary, artisanal, and tourism traditions, enriching the offering with diverse influences, fostering innovation without losing authenticity. This dynamic creates an integrated ecosystem between local agriculture, craftsmanship, hospitality, and culture, fostering a sustainable and resilient local economy. From an economic perspective, the integration of diverse cultures and territories supported by systemic policies increases the added value of local products, expands the market, and fosters new entrepreneurial opportunities, including digital ones. Food and wine, as a driving force, serves as a catalyst for regenerating communities and the region, promoting experiential tourism focused on sustainability and the valorization of local distinctiveness. Food and wine tourism, in particular, can stimulate qualified tourist flows seeking authenticity and quality, helping to preserve traditions and build a shared identity that is attractive to national and international visitors. Projects based on exchange and the creation of thematic tourist itineraries with strong local relevance contribute to strengthening interregional and international cooperation networks. This supports both social cohesion and economic revitalization based on cultural identities.

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